

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) voted with a majority of his colleagues in the House of Representatives to pass the final version of a bill to provide health care to 11 million children in modest-income families.

"The bottom line is our children should be receiving the medical care they require, end of story," said Rep. Farr. "That we have millions of kids without health insurance today is unacceptable. This legislation corrects one of the most glaring oversights of the Bush administration."

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization Act was approved by a vote of 290-135. The bill was immediately sent to President Obama who signed it into law.

"This legislation has been a long time coming," said Rep. Farr. "President Bush twice vetoed this legislation during the previous Congress, but this issue is far too important to give in to partisan politics. That Congress and the president joined forces to provide health coverage to million of uninsured children is further proof that change has come to Washington."

SCHIP was created in 1997 to provide health care coverage for children in families earning too little to afford health insurance for their children but too much to qualify for Medicaid. This legislation provides states the resources they need to cover 11.2 million uninsured children.

Funds will be generated by raising the tobacco tax by 62 cents. Raising the tobacco tax has the added benefit of promoting children's health by discouraging them from smoking. According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, a 61-cent increase in the tobacco tax means that nearly 1.9 million fewer children will take up smoking.

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